

## GENDER ACTION PLAN III: 2021-2025

### COUNTRY LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR BANGLADESH

#### 1 CONTEXT FOR EU ACTION: GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE COUNTRY

##### 1.1 Rationale

The basis for developing this Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) is the Bangladesh Gender Country Profile (GCP). Based on its findings, entry points and recommendations, analytical work has been carried out by a gender expert together with the EU Delegation's Gender Focal Point and EU Member States' Embassies, with support from the Delegation's Political and Cooperation Sections and HQ colleagues (INTPA.G1). The recommendations included in this CLIP take into account the Country Strategy for Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2024 and the Civil Society Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society in Bangladesh 2021-2025. The CLIP also includes gender-related external actions that contribute to the objectives and results of the priority areas of the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh, including joint action with EU Member States in the framework of two Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs).

The gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) objectives and actions proposed in this CLIP are the result of a participatory process of multi-stakeholder consultations, which took place throughout the full timeframe of the Gender Country Profile (GCP). This consultation process included 38 interviews with key stakeholders: 2 UN agencies; 2 EU Member States; 1 EU Member State development agency; 9 EU Delegation staff members; 9 civil society organisations, including 5 working with women's grassroots organisations; 10 Government representatives; 1 private sector representative; 1 representative from a youth organisation; 1 academic legal scholar; 1 acting judge and 1 business woman. The LCG (Local Consultative Group) on Women Advancement and Gender Equality of development partners was consulted, and preliminary findings were shared with them. In a similar way, findings of the GCP and recommendations were shared and validated during a workshop where 41 stakeholders took part.

A revision of the CLIP was carried out in November 2023. Updates are based on the latest developments in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment, new data and input from a joint consultation with EU Member States, like-minded partners and national stakeholders – namely civil society organisations (CSOs) and international organisations.

##### 1.2 Gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made progress in crucial areas related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) such as infant and maternal mortality, fertility and access to credit. In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report<sup>1</sup> (GGGR), Bangladesh emerged with an overall score of 0.722, ranking 59th among 146 countries and first among seven South Asian countries. The areas of strength include eliminating the gender gap in primary and secondary education, sex ratio at birth and political empowerment. In the 2023 GGGR, Bangladesh was among the first seven countries (together with Iceland, Norway, New Zealand, Finland, Germany and Nicaragua) in the political empowerment sub-index, as it achieved a level of gender parity of over 50%, partially thanks to long tenure of women at the helm of the state. By contrast, the cabinet and parliament only had 8% and 20.9% women in 2023, respectively.<sup>2</sup> As regards the 2021 UN-Gender Inequality Index, Bangladesh only ranked 129 worldwide among 191 countries,

<sup>1</sup> [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2023.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BGD>

with a GII value of 0.530. According to the most recent data on human development, Bangladesh’s value for 2021 was 0.661, an increase compared to previous years<sup>3</sup>.

Despite these achievements, inequality gaps and manifold forms of discrimination persist. Progress has been slow in ensuring equal access to financial resources, property and inheritance rights, business start-ups, affordable and quality public services, parental authority, access to health services and services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Inequalities persist in areas of sustainable development, such as political participation and representation (20.9% of parliamentary seats are held by women), secondary education (50.6% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 58.5 % of their male counterparts), and participation in the labour market (34.9% for women, compared to 78.8% for men).<sup>4</sup> Sex and gender disaggregated data, combined with an analysis of intersectionality, is lacking in key areas of sustainable human development (e.g. equal access to justice, decent work, green jobs, and decision-making in the public and private spheres, including in the financial and employment sectors).

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct negative impact on the women’s rights situation in the country, leading to losses of jobs, businesses and livelihoods, drastic reduction in women’s incomes, increased gender-based violence (including domestic violence), sexual harassment and a renewed rise in child marriage. A rise in trafficking of women, often through cybercrime, has also been observed.

**1.3 State of play of the implementation of national policy and international commitments**

**Bangladesh National Gender Machinery**

Institution	Competencies
National Council for Women Development (NCWD)	Highest level governmental entity headed by the Prime Minister
Parliamentary Committee on Women Affairs	Overseeing authority of the allocation of budget and implementation status
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoCWA)	Highest executive body for women and gender issues.
Department of Women Affairs	Founded in 1972, it is a countywide administrative body to implement gender issues. The department is under the MoCWA. It recently set up a national helpline to prevent violence against women.
Jatiya Mohila Shogstha	National association of women coordinated by the government
WID Focal Points	Official gender desk at different ministries and agencies

As of December 2023, the government has failed to update the 2011 National Women's Development Policy (NWDP)<sup>5</sup> and ensure alignment with the SDGs and the National Action Plan (2013). While remaining important policy frameworks, the policy and action plan would profit from an update. According to the NWDP, it is expected that women’s labour force participation will be increased through closing the gap between male and female enrolments in tertiary education, especially in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), better access to training, improving childcare availability and safety in women’s mobility and at the workplace, and increasing access to basic facilities at the workplace.

Over the last seven years, new laws and policies that among others include the promotion of gender equality, protection from vulnerability and gender-based violence (GBV) have been enacted. Relevant

<sup>3</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BGD>  
<sup>5</sup> [https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/policies/64238d39\\_0ecd\\_4a56\\_b00c\\_b834cc54f88d/National-Women-Policy-2011English.pdf](https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/policies/64238d39_0ecd_4a56_b00c_b834cc54f88d/National-Women-Policy-2011English.pdf)

legal frameworks in this regard are the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017<sup>6</sup> and the Dowry Prohibition Act 2018<sup>7</sup>. Several relevant plans and strategies were developed, including the 2014 Gender Equity Strategy of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), the National Social Security Strategy 2015-2026<sup>8</sup>, the Disabled Persons' Rights and Protection Action Plan 2018, and the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children (2018-2030)<sup>9</sup>. The Child Marriage Restraint Rules were formulated in 2018, as well as a National Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2018-2030), which aims to completely eliminate child marriage by 2041<sup>10</sup>.

In 2010, the High Court Division of the Supreme Court issued guidelines to prevent sexual harassment at the public and work place and stated that any kind of physical, mental or sexual harassment of women and girls at their work, educational and public places, including roads, was a criminal offence, punishable by fines and/or imprisonment. However, the Sexual Harassment Act has been pending for adoption since 2010. In 2018, the High Court issued another judgment on rape and sexual violence, where it prohibited the 'two finger test' on rape survivors to determine the occurrence of rape. It also provided guidelines on conducting medico-legal tests on rape victims and the responsibilities of the police in supporting victims. A Police Cyber Support service for Women (PCSW) was introduced in 2020 to support female victims of cyber-crime and enhance cybersecurity related awareness. In 2022, the Amendment of Evidence Bill repealed the provisions that allowed questioning about the character of a rape survivor during cross-examinations in court and included a provision allowing the submission of digital evidence before a court. In 2021, the Child Daycare Center Act was adopted in order to increase access to child care for working women.

However, there is no unified family law that would provide for equal rights for men and women in relation to marriage, divorce, maintenance and property inheritance. In these key areas, discriminatory laws and provisions remain in the national legislation, and monitoring and implementation remain insufficient.

The government has adopted gender responsive budgeting (GRB) mechanism with 43 ministries participating. However, the existing mechanism is not fully functional. There is a mandatory provision that 3% should be allocated for gender equality at Upazilla level. In reality, even if the threshold is reached, its application is faulty, for example by considering salaries for female employees as spending. There is a clear lack of capacities at all levels to implement and monitor gender-responsive budgeting, which limits the efficient use of national resource allocations.

The Eighth Five Year Plan for the period 2021-2025 focuses on increasing economic empowerment and better implementation of the National Women's Development Plan (NWDP).<sup>11</sup> The plan shows increased sensitivity by the Government of Bangladesh to tackle the intersectional dimension of inequality and discrimination, at least at the level of producing intersectional data (third gender persons, persons with disabilities, urban/rural). The Eighth Five Year Plan proposes a set of policy measures related to GEWE in sectors of strategic importance to the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh:

- a. Equal access to justice through measures such as improved access to free and quality legal aid, investment in the National Legal Aid Services Organisation's (NLASO) capacity so that it can effectively reach the poor and marginalized communities and improve their access to legal redress.

<sup>6</sup><https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/2018-10/Child%20Marriage%20Restraint%20Act%202017%20English.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.dpp.gov.bd/upload\\_file/gazettes/37373\\_28337.pdf](https://www.dpp.gov.bd/upload_file/gazettes/37373_28337.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://socialprotection.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/National-Social-Security-Strategy-English.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>[https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/page/bcf75e01\\_95e3\\_48ba\\_bfe4\\_3d88ea5f593c/English-National-Action-Plan-to-Prevent-Violence-Against-Women-and-Children-2013-20251.pdf](https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/page/bcf75e01_95e3_48ba_bfe4_3d88ea5f593c/English-National-Action-Plan-to-Prevent-Violence-Against-Women-and-Children-2013-20251.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>[https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/publications/cd85f424\\_9969\\_4f77\\_aec6\\_dce5c447acc9/NAPECM%20English.pdf](https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/publications/cd85f424_9969_4f77_aec6_dce5c447acc9/NAPECM%20English.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/68e32f08\\_13b8\\_4192\\_ab9b\\_abd5a0a62a33/2021-02-03-17-04-ec95e78e452a813808a483b3b22e14a1.pdf](http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/68e32f08_13b8_4192_ab9b_abd5a0a62a33/2021-02-03-17-04-ec95e78e452a813808a483b3b22e14a1.pdf)

- b. Increasing women's labour force participation through closing the gap between male and female enrolments in tertiary education, especially in TVET, and better access to training programmes.
- c. Improving childcare availability, improving safety of women's movements and in the workplace, increasing access to basic facilities such as toilets and sanitary napkins in the workplace.

GEWE frameworks and institutional settings recognise women as a distinct group and try to address their specific needs and development priorities. Challenges remain at the level of implementation of the policies, enforcement of laws and institutional capacity constraints, such as lack of monitoring capacities at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

The Bangladesh Gender Country Profile carried out in 2021 identified the following hampering factors:

- i) many district officials responsible for women's issues are not aware of the existing laws and policies;
- ii) there is a shortage of judges and some are not trained on these laws;
- iii) stereotypes and taboos influence prosecution, certain types of GBV are not properly defined/typified therefore not adequately treated as crimes;
- iv) lack of monitoring mechanisms and budgets for implementation of existing laws;
- v) lack of protection mechanism for witnesses of cases of VAWG/GBV;
- vi) lack of coordination among government departments;
- vii) some lawyers' unwillingness to settle cases within a short time.

Importantly, while progress is noticeable in the rights of the third gender (Hijra), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons continue to face legal as well as widespread social stigma and discrimination. Though rarely implemented, Section 377 of the Penal Code criminalises homosexual relations. LGBTI activists report that this law is still invoked by law enforcers to harass, extort, and blackmail LGBTI persons.

### **Commitments to international legal and development policy frameworks**

Bangladesh has signed most of the UN conventions related to women's rights. This includes the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which the country ratified in 1984 with some reservations.<sup>12</sup> Presently, both the government and civil society submit reports on a bi-annual basis. Bangladesh has also adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) for the period 2019-2022. Bangladesh has also signed the Child Rights Convention (CRC), the Vienna Convention and several International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. The government is also implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has regularly prepared reports for relevant United Nations (UN) bodies.

## **1.4 Main challenges and opportunities**

### **Key challenges identified in the Bangladesh Gender Country Profile:**

#### **Macro-level:**

- Lack of consolidation of gender equality-driven institutions and weak GEWE policy implementation and law enforcement, including enforcement of the principle of non-discrimination; Need for awareness and understanding of gender equality as a key driver of human capital development, green inclusive development, and a factor ensuring sustainable peace and social stability.

#### **Meso-level:**

- Lack of capacity of public institutions and frequent changes of officials to implement existing policies and frameworks (at local and national level).

<sup>12</sup> Reservation to articles 2, 13(a), 16.1(c) and 16.1(f). Later, and due to growing demand by civil society, the government lifted reservations 13 (a) and 16.1 (f), while reservations to articles 2 and article 16.1 (c) have not been lifted. To implement Beijing PfA Bangladesh has been periodically reporting since 2000.  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

- Serious consideration to assess progress towards intersectional equitable outcomes by service providers (public and private).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, measures to counter the social and economic impacts are urgently needed, especially since those who have been most disproportionately affected are were disadvantaged groups before the pandemic.

**Systemic/structural: Macro-meso-micro level:**

Social and gender norms were identified by stakeholders as a key obstacle to GEWE in Bangladesh. Discriminatory social and gender norms are structural and permeate all aspects of economic, social and political life, continuously perpetuating beliefs, prejudice and stereotypes. There is a risk that these transcend into emerging areas of development, such as digitalisation, green growth, energy efficiency and circular economy. Transforming these norms and practices will be a key concern in the EU Delegation's overall work, including MIP priority areas. Joint and concerted action is needed to stop the transfer of inequalities into new development areas and to ensure that post-COVID 19 recovery will be genuinely inclusive.

**The following opportunities were identified:**

- An enabling policy environment for the EU and Member States to increase its GEWE mainstreaming work in the five selected GAP III areas. There are ongoing dialogues with several relevant Ministries and Government of Bangladesh officials in some of these areas, either through policy dialogue or via implementing partners (for example, on women's labour rights via work with the ILO, as well as on gender equality in education via the EU's budget support programme for improving tertiary education and TVET). The EU and Member States will use this space for incorporating gender equality issues in meetings/agendas of sector-related policy dialogues (high-level, LCG level, CSOs level, private sector level, among others). Besides that, the EU Delegation will create an EU Member State task force as a mechanism to build synergies on programming, policy dialogue and strategic communication aimed at strengthening GEWE's mainstreaming more broadly.
- Existing efforts to promote women's economic and social empowerment need to be linked with empowerment, women's leadership, representation and agency to enter spaces and entities where policies and decisions are designed and made. This aspect should form an integral part of gender mainstreaming in project design.

Based on the consultations carried out with national stakeholders, Bangladesh seems to face challenges when it comes to the implementation of certain policies that can be used as enablers to boost GEWE. This matter offers a great opportunity for synergies on policy dialogue with the EU Delegation, EU Member States and national stakeholders and therefore make outcomes more impactful. Despite the pervasiveness of gender-based violence (GBV) and unequal access to justice, specialised women's tribunals exist in almost every district. Each district has one or more dedicated tribunals presided over by a District Judge to try only offences committed against women and children. Moreover, there is a significant number of laws that aim at protecting the rights of women and children, including the Domestic Violence Protection and Prevention Act of 2010. However, there are difficulties with the actual application of this legislation due to a number of factors, ranging from socio-cultural norms to lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different institutions. There is thus a need to place more emphasis on supporting the actual and unified application of the above mentioned Act.

Furthermore, the gradual change in the social mind-set, illustrated by the fact that certain terminologies formerly considered taboo were included in legal frameworks and more openly talked about in public life, needs to continue. The two Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) on Decent Work and on Green Energy Transition, respectively, open a space for innovative approaches to GEWE and for mainstreaming GEWE issues in areas that are crucial for the country's gender equality agenda in line with international standards/initiatives, such as through the implementation of ILO's decent labour standards (e.g. in the

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<sup>13</sup> Intersectional equitable outcomes are results that benefit women and girls persons in all their diversity and through their life course (including women with disabilities, women from minority and socially disadvantaged groups, women in very remote rural and coastal areas, women from LGBTIQ+ groups, migrant and internally displaced women.

RMG sector), climate change adaptation and mitigation commitments, the green energy transition and the digital transformation. Due to their strategic political relevance, both TEIs can contribute to an enabling space for joint action by the EU and Member States to mainstream GEWE in two challenging areas.

**2 SELECTED THEMATIC AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

**2.1 Priority areas of the EU’s Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh**

<p><b>Priority area 1: Human capital development</b> TEI: Decent work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specific objective 1:</b> Improve access to a full cycle of quality education, learning opportunities and training-to-work support for young people in Bangladesh.</li> <li>• <b>Specific objective 2:</b> Better employment opportunities for Bangladeshi youth, capitalizing on the opportunities of the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution and reducing the mismatch between labour supply and demand.</li> <li>• <b>Specific objective 3:</b> To enhance commitments for decent work and social protection for all in Bangladesh, covering the life-cycle, and enactment of labour legislation, in line with international labour standards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Priority area 2: Green inclusive development</b> TEI: Green energy transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specific objective 1:</b> To promote energy efficiency and affordable renewable energy.</li> <li>• <b>Specific objective 2:</b> To improve environmental protection and support climate change mitigation and adaptation in Bangladesh’s sustainable development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Priority area 3: Inclusive governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specific objective 1:</b> Women and girls are free from all for Member States of gender-based violence in the public sphere and in the work place.</li> <li>• <b>Specific objective 2:</b> To improve access to justice for disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Bangladesh.</li> <li>• <b>Specific objective 3:</b> Public service delivery and financial/fiscal management are improved through digital governance.</li> </ul>
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**GEWE responsiveness**

The EU’s Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh shows a certain level of GEWE sensitivity. **Priority area 1** shows a moderate level of gender equality sensitivity through inclusion of youth, women and minorities in key areas of human capital development (i.e. employment, decent work, social protection and quality education and TVET, including skills enhancement). There is also a relevant gender-sensitive component relating to child and mother nutrition, which relates to GAP III, Area # 3 (Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women). Health and nutrition of mothers are part of an overall approach to improve nutrition levels of women and girls in all their diversity and constitute indispensable factors to ensure human capital development throughout the life cycle.

As regards specific objectives for **priority area 2**, the EU Delegation will be working to promote GEWE in the green energy transition. At the macro level, the EU Delegation will collaborate with international partners (i.e. World Bank via strategic partnership with the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ)) and with the Government of Bangladesh through the Sustainable and Renewable Development Authority (SREDA) to promote and implement clean cooking programs focused on women as the receivers of technology and also as producers of relevant knowledge. The goal is two-fold: i) to empower women as change agents to promote clean cooking solutions in their neighbourhoods and communities and promote dissemination of clean cooking through them; and ii) to promote access to clean and affordable energy services by directly addressing the differential energy needs and concerns of women and men. This GEWE mainstreaming work will be done within a broader strategy of advancing gender equality and intersectional inclusion in sustainable human development. High-level policy dialogues will be held with key Ministries, including the National Gender Machinery and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). GEWE issues in macro-level policy areas relating to green energy efficiency and affordability will be included in the EU Delegation’s forthcoming sectoral gender analysis of the energy sector.

**Priority area 3** robustly integrates gender equality issues including GEWE and diversity perspectives in the broader policy area of inclusive governance, with particular attention to GBV and equitable access to justice for women and girls. As shown in Box #1 above, two of the three specific objectives are GEWE

mainstreamed and specific objective 3 will include GEWE components through engagement in gender responsive e-governance. Concretely, the EU Delegation will support efforts towards reducing intersectional inequalities in digitalised access to public service delivery (including equal digital access legal aid and GBV related services) in view of reducing gender and intersectional disparities affecting equal access to digital public services. In this respect, the EU Delegation will support the Government of Bangladesh in its commitment to implement the objectives set forth in the National Information and Communications Technology Policy (NIP 2015), and especially those related to ensuring social equity and universal access to quality public service delivery through digital technology. At a more practical level, the EU Delegation will support CSOs (including women's organisations) working with the most marginalised social groups in rural and urban areas, so that they can capably operate in the digital world (also in Bangla, as in many areas people do not speak English). In line with recommendations made in the CSO Mapping relating to the CSO Roadmap, the EU Delegation will allocate resources for reinforcing advocacy work by CSOs seeking to influence and monitor the government's policy and implementation of relevant national laws.

## 2.2 Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

To the EU Delegation and EU Member State Embassies in Bangladesh, gender equality is one of the fundamental pillars of fair and stable societies, and a fundamental element of the rights frameworks to which Bangladesh and the European Union have adhered. In line with the EU's Gender Action Plan III requirements, the EU and Member States in Bangladesh will ensure that at least 85% of all new external actions have gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant objective (G1) and at least one has GEWE as a principal objective (G2) by 2025. This will also include carrying out systematic gender analysis to inform the design of all new projects in each priority area/sector of the MIP, including cross-cutting issues. In order to meet this institutional objective, the EU Delegation and Member States will either commission transformative GEWE baselines<sup>14</sup> for its key priority areas or request that implementing partners build these baselines and allocate resources. The rationale behind this strategic choice responds to the urgent need to document and better tackle gender equality intersecting with other forms of discrimination and vulnerability.<sup>15</sup>

The following key thematic areas and overall thematic objectives are the pillars for the GAP III implementation.

- **Thematic Area #1**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Women and girls in all their diversity are free from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the workplace and online.
- **Thematic Area #2**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Women and girls in all their diversity access and fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive health rights.
- **Thematic Area #3**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, fully enjoy and exercise their equal economic, labour and social rights.
- **Thematic Area #4**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, participate equally in decision-making processes, in all spheres and at all levels of political and public life, including online, taking on leadership roles, to enjoy and exercise their human rights and seek redress if these rights are denied.
- **Thematic Area #5**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Integrating the women, peace and security agenda.
- **Thematic Area #6**; overall thematic objective (Impact): Women in all their diversity influence decision-making processes (policies and practices) on environmental conservation, climate change, green energy transition and digitalisation.

<sup>14</sup> By transformative GEWE baselines, we mean baselines that are gender responsive, intersectional and rights based.

<sup>15</sup> For example, discrimination affecting women and girls with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, from rural and remote areas, migrant and internally displaced persons due to conflict or climate change hazards, persons from LGTBIQ groups.

## **GAP III-PART I: EU Institutional and strategic objectives**

### **Objective 1: Increase the number and the funding of actions that are gender mainstreamed (OECD G1) and targeted (G2). Customised actions:**

- 1.1. The EU Delegation will implement several G1 actions, in line with the OECD G-marker 1 and with the 85% GEWE target (cf. Part I, Obj. 1.1.).
- 1.2. The EU Delegation will design and implement one stand-alone gender-targeted action (G2) during the period of 2021- 2025, in line with the OECD G-marker 2 and with the 85% GEWE target (cf. Part I, Obj. 1.2.).

### **Objective 2: Gender Responsive Budgeting is promoted (cf. Part I-Obj. 3). Action:**

- 2.1. Increase the number of actions (Budget Support operations or projects) supporting public finance management (PFM) reforms that include a gender budgeting component (cf. Part I Obj. 3.1).

### **Objective 3: Political, security and sectoral policy dialogues integrate a gender perspective (cf. Part I-Obj.7). Actions:**

- 3.1. Engage in dialogue on GEWE with the government and national gender equality mechanisms, parliaments, other key institutional actors, local authorities.
- 3.2. Engage in dialogue on GEWE with CSOs (including women organisations) in the framework of EU Roadmaps for engagement with Civil Society and involving youth soundboards.

### **Objective 4: Gender-responsive leadership enhanced (cf. Part I – “The EU Leads by example”, Obj. 10). Customised actions:**

- 4.1. Deliver training on GEWE and GAP III (including linkages to the MIP priority areas, especially Area 3 (GBV, with sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH) and forms of GBV specific to the Bangladeshi context). Ensure that GEWE training includes the intersectional/rights-based approach (cf. Part I-Obj.10.2; customised).
- 4.2. Ensure that Gender Advisors, Gender Focal Persons/Points (GFP) are in place and trained and have job descriptions that refer to their work on gender equality and the implementation of GAP III (cf. Part I-Obj.11.1).

## **GAP III-PART II: Key thematic areas and specific thematic objectives**

### **1. Thematic Area of Engagement: Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence**

#### **Specific objectives**

- 1.1. Women and girls, in all their diversity, are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the workplace and online through legislation and effective enforcement (cf. Part II-Obj. 1).
- 1.2. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are agents of change regarding discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, and gender-drivers of conflict (Cf. Part II-Obj.2).
- 1.3. Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity trafficked for all forms of exploitation and abuse have improved access to adequate and quality services for socio-economic integration and psycho-social support (cf. Part II-obj.5).
- 1.4. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are better protected from sexual and gender-based violence in fragile and humanitarian crisis situations (cf. Part II-obj.5).
- 1.5. Women’s rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence (cf. Part II-obj.7).



## **2. Thematic Area of Engagement: Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights**

### **Specific objectives**

- 2.1. Enabled legal, political and societal environment allowing women and girls to access quality sexual and reproductive health care and services and protecting their sexual and reproductive rights (cf. Part II-Obj.1).
- 2.2. Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information and education on sexual and reproductive rights (cf. Part II-Obj.2).

## **3. Thematic Area of Engagement: Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women**

### **Specific objectives**

- 3.1. Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems (cf. Part II-Obj.1; customised).
- 3.2. Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy (cf. Part II-Obj. 4; customised).
- 3.3. Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention primary level of education and technical and vocational training (TVET) for women, men, girls and boys (cf. Part II-Obj. 6; customised).
- 3.4. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, have improved nutrition level (cf. Part II-Obj. 10).

## **4. Thematic Area of Engagement: Promoting equal participation and leadership**

### **Specific objectives**

- 4.1. Enabling conditions created for equal participation of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, in decision-making (cf. Part II-Obj.1).
- 4.2. Equal access to justice is improved, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised groups of women and men in all their diversity in Bangladesh (MIP 2021-2027 for Bangladesh customised for enhanced compliance with GAP III-Part II Obj.2).
- 4.3. Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership fostered at community and individual levels – through policy dialogues, civic education, media, education and culture at all levels (cf. Part II-Obj. 4; customised).

## **5. Thematic Area of Engagement: Integrating the women, peace and security agenda**

### **Objectives (EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security/WPS 2019-2024)**

- 5.1. Participation – Increase women's leadership and participation in all policy-making decisions/processes in all areas related to peace and security.
- 5.2. Gender mainstreaming - Systematically mainstream a gender perspective as an integral part in all EU policies and actions.
- 5.3. Leading by example - Enhance further the EU's political commitments and actions for the implementation of the WPS Agenda at local, national, regional and international levels.
- 5.4. Prevention - Play an active role in the prevention, monitoring and reporting of conflict-related human rights' violations against women and girls and in the promotion of zero-tolerance/full accountability policies to help end impunity and bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice; Support legislative and institutional reforms as well as transitional justice processes that fully integrate the principle of non-discrimination and comply with international human rights standards.
- 5.5. Protection - Actively promote the protection and safeguarding of women's and girls' rights as well as the increase in women's and girls' access to justice at local, national, regional and international levels through special emphasis on restorative justice and the rights of survivors and victims ; Support all efforts for institutional mechanisms to be established and/or activated for the protection of women and girls, as well as men and boys, in fragile environments and or conflict-affected contexts to help prevent all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

5.6. Relief and recovery - Provide adequate and appropriate relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations that meet the needs of women and girls.

## **6. Thematic Area of Engagement: Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green energy transition and the digital transformation**

### **Specific objectives**

6.1. Increased participation of women and girls in all their diversity in decision-making processes on environment, climate change, green energy transition and digitalisation (cf. Part II-Obj. 1; customised).

6.2. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, addressing climate change in their daily lives and preserving the natural environment are recognised and valued (cf. Part II-Obj.3; customised).

6.3. Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity participate fully and equally in the opportunities offered by the digital transformation (cf. Part II-Obj. 4 of Digitalisation).

## **2.4 Potential for synergies, partnerships, cooperation, joint implementation**

### **Synergies and joint implementation with EU Member States**

Potential joint implementation will be developed in the framework of the Team Europe Initiatives on Decent Work and on Green Energy Transition, respectively. The EU Delegation has already started a process of consultation and there are two working groups actively engaged in these TEIs. GEWE issues will be included in some of the joint actions identified and in relation to decent work and women's roles in the green energy transition.

**The TEI on the Green Energy Transition** is a joint European approach to support the green energy transition in Bangladesh, through which the EU Delegation and Member States engage in policy dialogue with the Government and other stakeholders to build and share common sector values and objectives. The TEI includes in its activities the support to the integration of GEWE in Bangladesh, as a cross cutting principle. The TEI already has a common portfolio of projects, which are promoted, implemented and funded by the EU, Member States and like-minded partners. Some of these projects, funded e.g. by GIZ and AFD (the German and French development agencies, respectively), directly address gender equality and women empowerment/entrepreneurship. Some contain gender mainstreaming elements and are part of the TEI, and many include GEWE mainstreaming and minorities as specific beneficiaries. The Member States involved in this TEI are Germany (co-chair along with the EU Delegation), Sweden, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and like-minded Norway and Switzerland, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EU Delegation has finalized the design of the EU Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2022 on Partnership for Green Energy Transition, which is now at contracting phase and fully aligned with TEI GET. As part of this action, an increased involvement of women will be ensured in: i) the design of policies conducive to a greener and sustainable power system (mainly through capacity building and technical assistance); ii) capacity building and training activities for utilities, particularly in the digitisation of utility business and loss reduction; iii) awareness raising for energy consciousness activities. Moreover, an activity package is designed to improve employment opportunities for female professionals in the energy sector by stimulating the government and the private sector to employ qualified female professionals and to conduct an innovation challenge for renewable energy and energy efficiency to increase women's participation in private sector initiatives in renewable energy and related services.

At regional level, two pipeline operations will target gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as significant objectives, namely: i. the regional project on Energy Connectivity in South Asia, where activities will include supporting women's participation in decision-making processes; ii. The EU ACSIS project on Accelerating Climate Smart Infrastructure in South Asia, where a specific action in Bangladesh will look at the employability of women in the Green Economy (including renewables). Other Team Europe led gender activities in the energy sector include joint events such as the GIZ-EU

roundtable discussion titled “Women in STEM Education: Breaking Barriers and Achieving Gender Parity in Technology and Innovation” held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Finally, the EU and GIZ are jointly supporting an initiative in Bangladesh called Shoktikonna (“Power Women” - <https://www.shoktikonna.org/>), having the aim of empowering young women engineers involved in the green energy transition, and more generally of increasing women’s engagement in the Energy and Power Sector in Bangladesh

**The Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on Decent Work** is a joint EU approach which responds to the global Decent Work Agenda and includes interventions in support of all four pillars of this agenda: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue. The TEI is co-chaired by the Netherlands, Denmark and the EU. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway are members. Historically, Bangladesh has faced gender disparities in the labour market, with women experiencing limited access to formal employment, wage gaps and unequal opportunities for career development. For example, in the RMG sector, the biggest export-oriented sector in Bangladesh, women make up the majority of the workforce, while only 5% are in supervisory positions. The TEI flagship programme Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh (2023-2027), co-funded by the EU, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden, will try to tackle some of the key pressing issues for women at the workplace, and have a gender dimension integrated through labour law reforms, labour administration institutional strengthening and enterprise-level work. Some of the issues include: women leadership at the workplace and career progression, participation of women in social dialogue, addressing the gender pay gap, tackling sexual harassment against women at the workplace, and others. The TEI working group also actively maps ongoing interventions of the members in support of the decent work agenda. The current investments go over 0.5 billion euros in the last few years, with over 50 programmes. While most of these programmes partially address gender issues at the workplace, some have also had an explicit focus on gender equality and women empowerment (e.g. the ‘Ekotay Morjada – Unity for Dignity’ project funded by the EU which supported the socio-economic rights of 800 RMG and domestic workers, mostly women, in the Dhaka area). Another example is the ‘Women’s Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems’ (WEESMS). This project is funded by Sweden and targets development, growth, and creation of women-led/owned and women-oriented Small and Medium Enterprises (500 SMEs). They have facilitated job creation for women in rural areas, in order to achieve an overall increase in women’s participation in the labour market in Bangladesh.

EU-Member State cooperation will be strengthened on GBV, as at least one EU Member State (Denmark) will be working to reduce incidences of violence against women and children and improve redress through collaboration between relevant ministries and non-governmental agencies. Synergies will also be sought with the Denmark-supported programme “Multi Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women” (MSPVAW), including capitalisation on results achieved in previous phases aimed at strengthening the institutional set-up, both at the central and local levels. GEWE cooperation with Sweden and the Netherlands will be within the TEI as explained above, and through joint dialogue and outreach activities.

**Strategic partnerships with UN Agencies.** Strategic partnerships with UN Agencies are ongoing to accompany the government’s efforts to enforce and implement existing laws and policies on access to justice and GBV. In line with targets under the MIP justice priority, the EU Delegation is working with UNDP to increase women’s access to justice and support women and girls to claim their rights. Under the dedicated GAP III, G2 Action, the EU Delegation has entered negotiations with UN Women to work on prevention and response to GBV. UN Women also expressed interest in collaborating jointly with the EU Delegation and Member States in pushing for implementation of gender budgeting, including public finance management (PFM) and budget support. Collaboration could also be useful through advocacy work to push for the review of some legislation, in the light of persistent gaps in legal definitions of acts of VAWG which contribute to impunity (for example the definitions of sexual harassment and consent).

**Engagement with CSOs in design, implementation & monitoring.** Engagement with CSOs, or indeed with all non-state actors (private sector, social enterprises, mass organisations, think tanks, etc.), will be instrumental for the effectiveness of the CLIP. In the coming years, the EU Delegation and Member States will meaningfully involve CSOs and women's organisations during implementation and monitoring of the CLIP through different activities (for example, consulting them on the design of programmes, projects and Calls for Proposals (CfP), so that their perspectives on GEWE are mainstreamed into new Actions and women's and girls' specific needs and priorities are properly integrated in the CLIP implementation and monitoring. CSOs advocating for gender equality will be the key drivers and beneficiaries of an enhanced enabling environment for CSOs in Bangladesh. The EU Delegation is presently developing two calls for proposals, one under G2 action and one combining thematic funding lines for CSOs and human rights that will require all applicants to at least score a G1 gender marker.

### 3 TARGETED ACTION(S) SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In October 2023, the EU Delegation in Bangladesh concluded a Financing Agreement, titled 'Strengthening Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence (GBV) at the public and workplace in Bangladesh', for a targeted gender action related to MIP Priority Area 3: Inclusive Governance, and more specifically to the MIP-specific objective #1: Women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence in the public sphere and in the workplace. The foreseen amount for this G2 action in the MIP (2021-2027) is EUR 10 million (3% of the indicative total). Under the component for indirect management (EUR 4.8 million), the EU is negotiating a contribution agreement with UN Women. An equal amount will be committed under a call for proposals to be published at the end of 2023 or early 2024.

Under its first component, the proposed action aims to support an enabling policy and institutional environment for improved gender-responsive governance. Partners will contribute to the effective implementation of the 2009 High Court Directive on sexual harassment and the formulation of appropriate laws to address GBV in the public and workplace, in particular the Sexual Harassment Act pending for adoption since 2010, and advocate for repealing discriminatory provisions from existing laws. It will also advocate for gender-responsive budgeting by working with elected officials at Union, Upazilla and District level. Under the second component, the action will improve access to survivor-centred services. In line with the 'Essential Service Package', access to integrated support will be improved by strengthening local governments' referral linkages with multi-sectorial essential services. Partners will also engage with local police and in particular the Bangladesh Police Women Network. Finally, under the third component, the action will aim at awareness raising and understanding of GBV, including among men and boys. It will strengthen the capacities of RMG and other export oriented factories, secondary schools, universities and the transport sector to prevent, report and respond to GBV, in areas where GBV and sexual harassment rates are comparatively higher.

Relevant GAP III thematic area for this G2 Action: Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (SWD-GAP III, Specific thematic Objectives 1, 2, 3).

#### **Main indicators to measure results (SWD GAP III)**

- Extent to which legislation and/or policy prohibiting/addressing VAWG has been developed, strengthened and/or implemented.
- Number of legislative actions taken in partner country to criminalise gender-based violence, including online, and to prosecute perpetrators, in line with international standards.
- % of women and girls in all their diversity who report feeling or/and experiencing increased safety in private and public spheres (including mobility).

- % of women, including those facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, who report experiencing physical or sexual violence who seek help, by sector i.e. (a) government services and civil society services; or (b) social welfare, legal aid, housing/shelter, police protection (customised)
- % of gender-based violence cases reported to the police, brought to court which resulted in the perpetrators being sentenced, disaggregated at least by sex and age (customised)
- Extent to which partner country institutions' capacities to fight gender-based violence is increased.

#### 4 ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The EU Delegation and Member States will strengthen its policy dialogue with key Ministries, including the National Gender Machinery, namely the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). The Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs also play important roles for GEWE in Bangladesh, and the EU Delegation and Member States will continue its policy dialogues with them, including integration of GEWE and intersectional issues in social protection, access to higher education and TVET for women, youth and minorities. The EU Delegation and Member States will also include GEWE in its dialogue with Ministries that are key to push gender GEWE in challenging areas such as energy efficiency and affordability, climate change and digitalisation. The relevant governmental authorities were consulted during the development of the GCP and the CLIP, among other stakeholders. The Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society for the period 2021-2025 includes in its action plan a yearly dialogue session with women's organisations and organisations promoting women's and girls' rights.

Two rounds of consultations in 2023, one with a view to the G-2 Gender action and one for the CLIP revision, confirmed the interest in pursuing a more dedicated dialogue among donors and CSO stakeholders. All participants welcomed the idea to have a platform to share lessons learnt, evidence and statistics and plan for joint advocacy initiatives. Potential thematic issues identified for future discussion were gender budgeting, the legal framework (especially child marriage act, inheritance law, sexual harassment act etc.) and women's labour force participation.

Gender equality, women empowerment and women's rights issues should be more systematically incorporated in meetings/agendas of sector-related policy dialogues. Policy dialogue, followed by joint action by the EU and its Member States on key thematic areas supporting the roll-out of the EU's Global Gateway Strategy, will be reinforced and properly monitored regarding i.a. decent labour, climate change adaptation and mitigation, access to justice, gender-based violence, inheritance law and rights, green energy transition, and digitalisation.

#### 5 OUTREACH AND OTHER COMMUNICATION/PUBLIC-DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES

Strategic communication and public diplomacy offer an opportunity to recall EU values in the field of human rights and democracy, as well as to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, the EU Delegation and Member States in Bangladesh will continue to take active part in the celebration of specific events to amplify such values, more precisely:

- 8 March: **International Women's Day**
- 24 June: **International Day of Women in Diplomacy**
- 11 October: **International Day of the Girl Child**
- 15 October: **International Day of Rural Women**
- 25 November: **International Day to end Violence against Women and Girls** followed by UN Women's 16 days of activism campaign that calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls
- 10 December: **Human Rights Day.**

Both 8 March and 25 November present great opportunities for synergies with implementing partners. Communication activities are coordinated by the LCG (Local Consultative Group) on Women Advancement and Gender Equality, consisting of representatives of the Government of Bangladesh, the

EU, EU Member States and other partner organisations supporting gender issues. Activities include a wide range of actions ranging from events, social media campaigns to press and media outreach. The EU Delegation has also joined Plan International in its *#GirlsTakeOver* campaign to mark the International Day of the Girl Child.

Regarding the gender and energy nexus, the EU has been supporting a grassroots-led initiative called Shoktikonna (“Power Women” - <https://www.shoktikonna.org/>), which has the aim to empower young women graduated in STEM and involved in the green energy transition, and more generally to increase women’s engagement in the Energy and Power Sector in Bangladesh, including access to employment and decision-making positions. In terms of communication, the EU engagement consists of sharing and disseminating the EU energy and gender relevant policies and inviting inspiring women participants/potential role models, through webinars with DG INTPA and DG ENER representatives, researchers from the Florence School of Regulation (European University Institute), experts from the EU Global Technical Assistance Facility (GTAF), and events participation by the EU Ambassador and the EU green energy team. The target audience is broadened by media and press coverage. The EU support has a Team Europe approach, with Germany (GIZ) as co-supporting partner.

Mirroring the new strategic approach to communication, as part its G2 action on “Strengthening Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence at the Public Workplace in Bangladesh”, the EU Delegation, together with EU Member States, will mobilise like-minded partners for an awareness-raising campaign on the negative impact of social norms on women’s and girls’ lives. The campaign will take place in public spaces (such as the newly opened metro in Dhaka, schools and universities) and on social media by cooperating with young Bangladeshi influencers for wider dissemination.

Moreover, many EU-funded cooperation projects foresee strategic communication and public diplomacy activities. Gender equality and women’s rights, gender-sensitive media, and access to information are particularly prominent among the topics of outreach activities. Online campaigns related to women’s rights and gender equality are planned to be organised by the EU and its Member States on an annual basis. In addition, the EU Delegation and Member States will continue to be in contact with different implementing partners in order to find opportunities to promote the impact on the ground through physical events and online activities.

Finally, the EU Delegation and Member States will strategically include GEWE as a visible element when setting up targeted campaigns to promote the roll-out of the Global Gateway Strategy in Bangladesh.

## **6 TECHNICAL FACILITY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO SUPPORT GAP III IMPLEMENTATION**

In Bangladesh, the implementation of the GAP III CLIP will be supported through ongoing actions and the EU’s Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh, through priority area 1 (Human Capital Development), priority area 2 (Green Inclusive Development) and priority area 3 (Inclusive Governance). In priority area 1, all actions have gender equality as a significant objective (G1), 90% of indicative (€145 million) resources is focused on G1 in social protection, decent work and education. Social protection is largely contributing to mother and child benefit programmes and workers’ unemployment benefits for export-oriented industries - mainly women. In priority area 2, 80% of indicative resources (€60 million) will be allocated to G1 actions in energy efficiency & renewable energy and environmental protection & climate change. Under priority area 3, 90% of indicative resources (€56.8 million) will be allocated for gender equality actions, including one G2 action on gender-based violence in the public sphere and in the workplace, as indicated above. The action Promoting Justice for All for a more inclusive and effective justice system in Bangladesh will have gender equality as a significant objective (G1). The action will aim at increased utilisation of local justice services by indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, women, people living in poverty and other vulnerable groups.

A total of 261.8 million out of €306 million (85.5%) of the indicative resources will thus be focusing on G1 and G2 actions under the MIP for 2021-2027.

Apart from the geographic programmes, the thematic programmes for human rights, democracy and CSOs will also target GEWE. These programmes will strongly encourage women to engage in social, civic, political and economic life, and ensure their contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development through the country's digital transformation and climate-neutrality targets. In the same way, the EU Delegation and Member States will continue to encourage implementing partners to engage with men and boys in transforming mentalities and behaviours, so that the reversal in progress towards gender equality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a rise in gender bias and stereotyping, can be effectively tackled and ultimately overcome.

The EU Delegation and Member States will systematically include in its technical and financial support a gender and intersectional approach in order to avoid the risk of focusing on women only. The geographic and thematic grants will allocate resources to support the state authorities, CSOs and women's rights organisations to amplify the voices and proposals of women and girls in all their diversity, so that their needs and priorities are taken into account.

The EU Delegation is also envisaging setting up a GEWE Technical Facility to develop and enhance gender and intersectional capacities through technical assistance (TA). This GEWE Facility will be inclusive of all EU Delegation Staff. It will include ad hoc technical support for better understanding and implementation of GAP III through training/capacity building, skills enhancement for developing baselines in key areas, and working with gender and intersectional indicators. The Facility will also include ad hoc capacity building for line ministries, including the National Gender Machinery, statistical offices, as well as other country level actors working on gender equality and national gender networks.

Consistent with the commitments made by the EU and the Government of Bangladesh in the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, in the coming years the EU Delegation and Member States will work jointly with all its partners and stakeholders to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment remain at the heart of the country's agenda for equitable and sustainable human development.

*[e-signed]*

Charles Whiteley

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Annex: Gender Country Profile, Bangladesh, August 2021